

# Movie Makers

July-August, 2001

Volume 11 No. 4

The American Motion Picture Society

**Sponsors of the oldest continuing Film/video Festival in the world.**

## *Judging the AMPS Festival*

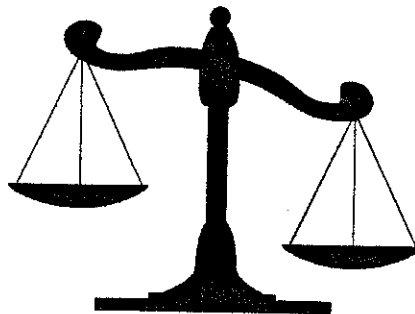
Matt Jenkins

**I**t's festival time again and I am excited! I am overseeing this year's judging. Of course that means I cannot enter the festival. After all, how would it look if I entered the competition, oversaw the judging, and won? I believe in our festival and I am pleased to have the chance to help with it.

Now for my philosophy on judging. Look back over your past issues of "Movie Makers." In many of the articles, I wrote about deciding which festivals to enter. I have suggested that you try to find out who the judges are. So to be fair here is some information on judging for our festival.

All entries will be judged.

I will select judges who have some sort of background in visual production. I will try to have three judges look at each entry.



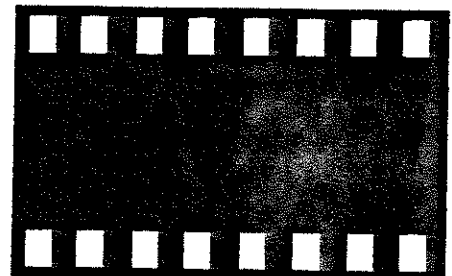
I will have a training session prior to the judging in order to make sure the judges understand the definition of amateur and independent categories. Also, in this training session,

we will review basic concepts of production and go over the judging sheet.

I will try my best to ensure fair judging of all entries

This is new to me, to be on the judging side of the fence. And since it is a competition, there will be entries that win and entries that don't win. I hope I am ready for the compliments and the complaints!

Good luck to all who enter!



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## Movie Makers

Dedicated to the interests of the Serious Motion Picture Maker.

Vol.11 July-August 2001  
No. 4

MOVIE MAKERS is published bi-monthly on the 25th day of odd-numbered months by the AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY and features news and articles of interest to the serious motion picture maker, video or film.

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**George W. Cushman**  
Founder,  
1909- 1996

Matt Jenkins, Editor

The AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY is not connected with any other organization, society, club or association. The Society does not offer dual, club, nor group memberships.

Address correspondence to the Society, 30 Kanan Rd. Oak Park, CA 91377-1105. E-mail: RGARET-SON@AOL.COM.

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**SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES**

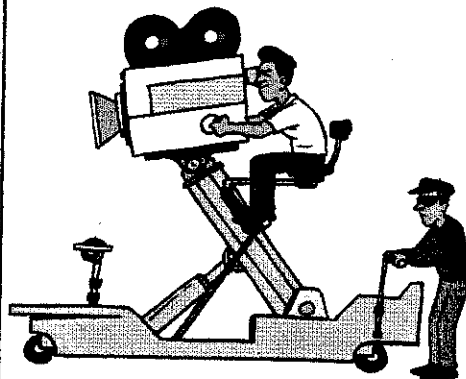
CANADA, Margaret Chamberlain, 2701 Arbutus Rd, Victoria, BC V8N1W8.

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37, Canberra, Stonehouse  
Gloucestershire, GL 10 2PR  
England

## From the Editor

**Y**es, it is hot out. That's why I try to plan to do my editing in June and July. So I can be in a cool and dark room. The Oklahoma heat is tough. I've been pleased with my efforts though. I've managed to get two short movies edited (both were shot in 16mm!) I've shot and edited one short documentary and I have a larger documentary shot and ready for editing.

I've enjoyed working with film again. There's nothing like a beautiful film grain. But it is expensive. An ingenious cinematographer I work with, named Dan Perrin, designed and built a tripod capable of holding two cameras. One



camera is the 16mm camera. The other camera can either be a digital or SVHS camera. I shoot the scene with both cameras at the same time. The video is used for reference and for audio. There is a slight keystone problem in viewing the film or video but

otherwise this combination works extremely well.

My latest unedited documentary is about low budget movie producers. While they have other employment, they routinely produce low budget epics for wide audiences. And even though there were many differences among the movie makers, there was a common theme. They want their productions taken seriously.

I think all producers, whether they consider themselves amateurs, professionals or independent want their productions taken seriously. I think that a certain "snob appeal" has existed in the U.S. regarding filmmaking. If it wasn't made in Hollywood it isn't any good. How untrue! I would love to hear from our international members regarding this issue. How are low budget or amateur productions perceived in your country?

Remember, now is the time to send your entry in for the American International Film and Video Festival. Be sure to read the Call for Entries in this issue. The cut off date is August 31st.

And, as always your comments and questions are welcomed at :

[mattj@cameron.edu](mailto:mattj@cameron.edu).

## CALL FOR ENTRIES

**T**he oldest continuously running festival in the USA, the "American International Film and Video Festival" is pleased to announce that the 72nd running of the contest will be held this year.

The history of this prestigious festival has been presented in previous issues of "Movie Makers" so we won't go into that at this time, but suffice to say, it has seen some excellent film and videos in its tenure.

The application form does not list the location of the showing of the winners of the festival though.

AMPS is pleased to announce that we are participating with SAVAC and the TBW (Ten Best of the West) for a joint festival to be held at Jackson Hole, in the magnificent state of Wyoming. All of us enjoy wonderful scenery, our videos speak of this often, and Jackson Hole is one of the prime locations in the United States. Located just outside of Yellowstone, the scenery is beyond pale.

We will include more information about this in future editions of "Movie Makers", but mark these dates on your calendar, October 11-14, 2001.

## Judging the Documentary

No. 16, January 1994

George Cushman

**F**estivals in this country find the proportion between documentary and dramatic fare entered for competition is close to even.

Large festivals (200 or more entries) will usually judge categories separately. Smaller festivals normally do not.

Thus in the smaller festivals each judge must compare a documentary with a story picture or to any other kind. The most common way of doing this is to evaluate a picture percentage-wise on a scale of 1 to 100, the top figure representing what perfection in that category would be.

### VARY WIDELY

Documentaries vary so widely that no one set of guidelines can be used for all such work. The following are quite general and will apply most of the time:

1. Does the picture have a firm and satisfactory introduction?
2. Does the picture have a point of view? It doesn't need one but if it does, is it consistent?

3. Is the subject fully shown and made clear?

4. Does the picture tell the story instead of the narrator?

5. Does the picture stick to its theme or wander aimlessly at times?

6. Does the ending sum up the theme (If there is one) and settle all questions raised?

And then there is the final question that is asked of motion pictures: How well did the maker achieve his objective cinematically?

The above are quite general and would be useful in evaluating most documentaries. Quite different points to consider would be required with unusual entries or those off the beaten track.

The traditional rules of good movie making must also be considered: composition, lighting, editing, pacing, camera handling, etc.

When the judging ends it is not difficult to compare the percentages and thus determine the finest entry.

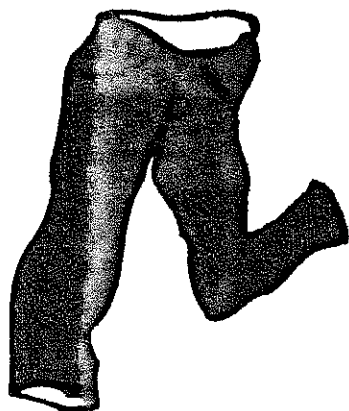
In a large festival using separate juries for each category, the same system could apply.

# **SAM... You Made the Pants Too Long!**

Stan Whitsitt

**D**O YOU SUFFER FROM PAINFUL ELIMINATION? This question posed in a magazine advertisement could elicit a "yes" from many film makers who experience the affliction but in a different context.

Those of you that have put up with past diatribes, know that my pet peeve is weak or non-existent story telling in a film. Of course, any curmudgeon worth his salt, is never caught with only pet peeve to growl about, so I am taking this opportunity to dump on you about this other one.



There was an old vaudeville routine or song in which the punch-line was "Sam, you made the pants too long!" I have sat through innumer-

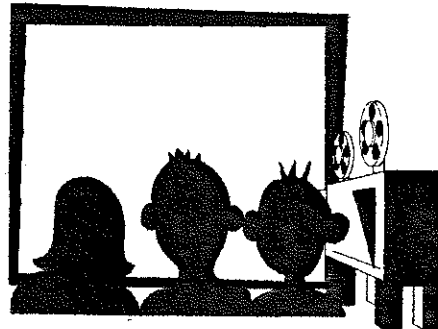
able films in which, before they were over, I wanted to jump up and scream, "Sam (or whoever,) them pants are too dam long!"

Too many filmers (myself included) have a tendency to fall in love with their footage. This infatuation makes them reluctant to part with any of their inamorato when the moment of truth arrives at the editing bench. We have this gorgeous footage and, "By god, the public deserves to see it!"...Even if it doesn't fit into the context of the story, or repeat something the film maker has already said.

As a judge in many contests I have seen numerous examples of the above. The film maker has put together a very respectable film. It has told the story and appears to be tapering off to a graceful textbook ending. Just as the audience is poised to applaud, it stops, and takes off again for another series of scenes which repeat what has already been said or adds nothing to the story. When it started, I was thinking, "What a great film!" But by the time it paused and restarted maybe a couple of times, I was saying to myself, "For crying out loud! Isn't this dog ever going to end?"

Sometimes we will see a striking scene and then the same scene crops up several times more before the film ends. You just know the filmer had more footage than he

needed for his story, but he couldn't bring himself to discard the rest, so he cut it up into several pieces and inserted them here and there. If it is a very good shot the audience will remember it in the original context and be momentarily distracted each time it appears.



Where brevity really pays off is in the short, more arty type films. Abstract films and ones cut to songs (a la MTV) are the most common types made by amateurs. This type of film can be exciting, but unless there is a great variety of images, if they are stretched too long they quickly lose their magic.

I recently saw a delightful little film cut to the song "Thank Heaven for Little Girls." The film maker had a good variety of active shots of a little girl about three years old, which we all know is the most adorable stage a little girl goes through. The scenes were intercut to match the song which ran about three minutes. The song ended and he had an absolutely enchanting short movie...but instead of ending the film with

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Movies Should Move! Get the Picture?

Stan Whatsitt

**C**lose your eyes and picture this scene...you have been invited to your best friend's home to view his latest cinematic creation, filmed with his new-state-of-the-art movie or video camera that cost him the price of a kitchen remodeling job and two weeks of silence from his spouse.

"O.K.," you tell him, "squirt 'em on the wall," as you settle back to enjoy the show.

The pictures are rock steady, the colors are gorgeous, the composition is great, technically they are terrific.

Your buddy leans forward to bask in your admiration, and you realize with great embarrassment, that he has caught you in the middle of a very wide yawn. Why? It is simple. His movies are not moving.

Does it sound far fetched? Don't you believe it! It happens often enough to spawn a lot of bad jokes about amateur movies and their makers. How many times have you suffered through interminable scenes of people frozen in

the "family album" snapshot poses, scenery that just sits on the screen, and cathedrals or statues doing what they do best, just set there like they have for 500 years?

Too many people fail to recognize the potential of a motion picture camera, and use it in the same manner they do their still camera.

Many subjects are basically static, but are necessary for continuity and to the overall effect of the film.

The manner in which the film



maker meets the challenge of such an situation determines the overall excellence, or lack of same, in his finished production.

The movie maker should strive to avoid those static situations in his films. It is a matter of technique, and methods will vary with the individual. Let's look at two of the most common problems encountered.

Consider scenery. In a travel or vacation film, it is essential that you show scenery. The snapshot techniques in a

movie is deadly. Give your audience the scenery...but in small and varied portions. The most majestic scenic panorama induces snores if held on the screen for ten seconds or longer. Breaking your ten, fifteen, or twenty second view into several varied angle or telephoto detail shots will give the audience the same picture but still maintain movement and hold the viewers' interest.

Try interspersed action with static scenes. Two methods I do not recommend panning or zooming. If you must pan or zoom, do it carefully, slowly, and rarely.

Another common situation that can cause your film to look amateurish is the way you film people. When most people realize they are on camera, they have a tendency to freeze in the stilted, uncomfortable looking pose of the family album snapshot. Film your people doing something even if you have to practice a bit of gentle deception. You can pretend to adjust the camera and film them as they carry on unaware that you are shooting, or you can pretend to take footage after they think they are off camera.

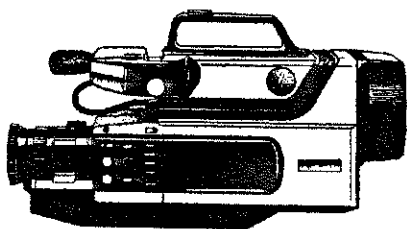
Children chasing a puppy, or a grandmother busy with her knitting will make much more exciting film fare than if they are just standing and staring at the camera. If they know they are being filmed, tell

*(Continued on page 8)*

## CONVENTION

Roger Garretson

One of the aspects of video and/or movie making, is the friendship or fellowship that is generated by our mutual love for this hobby.



User groups, video clubs, and like organizations offer us an opportunity to meet with other videographers and discuss our new production, ask for advice, make observations about the ineptness of our judges (if our entry is not the winner), and in general, develop a bond with other members of our group(s). Occasionally, this friendship may be the prime reason why some members attend, but that's fine, because we all benefit from those friendships.

Why am I bringing this up under the headline, "Convention"? Because, those same friendships also extend to the gathering of the clan at video conventions. There are several that many of us are familiar with, PSA, SAVAC, TBW (Ten Best of the West) and of course, AMPS to name a few.

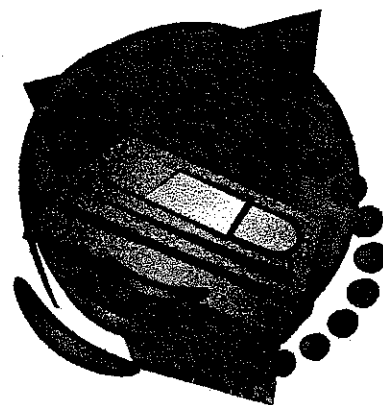
The SAVAC convention in Jackson Hole, Wyoming from October 11-14 is our opportunity to gather at one of the most magnificent scenic locations in the United States. Located at the foot of the Tetons mountain range,



Jackson Hole is just south of Yellowstone National Park.

SAVAC has invited TBW and AMPS to show the winning videos of their festivals at the convention, so we will have an

opportunity to see winning videos from three festivals at the same place. Those folks attending, have an opportunity to do much the same things at the convention as we do at our local video clubs, socialize, ask questions, etc, but, on a larger scale



than at our clubs.

I would encourage you to attend this and other conventions to expand your circle of friends and acquaintances and learn more about this interesting hobby.

Details for reservations are included on the registration form, included in this issue.

See you all there!!!

(Continued from page 4)

the end of the song, he started the song again. With that move the enchantment was gone. The images were more or less the same as we had seen before, and it totally spoiled the effect of that which we had just seen.

What had started as a prize-winning effort was relegated to the ranks of the "also-rans." By adding some beautiful footage he couldn't bear to throw away, the film maker destroyed the integrity of a fine film. Many years ago I read that some well known film maker was quoted as saying "to have a successful film, edit it down to what you consider absolute bare bones, then go over it and cut

it by ten percent."

I have tried this and it works. In some instances, after viewing the shortened results for a while, I could see where another ten percent cut would have produced an even better movie.

So, after my harangue you may well ask what is the right length for a film. As with most questions there is no absolute answer. (How is that for selling out?) Different people will give different answers. To validate this statement I will quote a few:

*"The length of film should be like a woman's skirt. Long enough to cover the subject, but short enough to be inter-*

*esting."*

-Fred Briggs.

*"The length of the film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder."*

-Alfred Hitchcock

I will say it should be long enough to say what you want to say...no more, no less.

In public speaking there is a saying, "Stand up, speak up, and shut up!" This could, and should apply to our films as well. That bit of wisdom enables me to segue into my finale with another old vaudeville maxim that I advocate, **ALWAYS LEAVE THEM WANTING MORE!**

## Upcoming Festivals

Close Date	Festival Name and address for forms	Open to:	Subject	Format	Time Limit	Entry Fee	Award	Show Dates
8/15/01	Mednarodni Video Festival, Krovce Alojz, Dupleška Cesta 117, SLO-2112 MARIBOR,, Slovenia, Europe (Note 1)	A	Open	MN VHS-C svhs_c	15 min	\$0	V	Oct 20
8/15/01	SAVAC Int'l Movie Contest, % Bob Makara 264 Hamilton Ct., Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236 or e-mail: remakara@yahoo.com	ABC	Open	HJMNO P	20 min	\$10 xx \$20 yy	UV	Oct 11-1401
8/31/01	72 <sup>ND</sup> American Int'l Film & Video Festival % AMPS, 30 Kanan Rd., Oak Park, CA 91377 e-mail: rgaretson@aol.com	ABC D	Open	HJLMN OPQ	30 min	\$10 \$8 add'l entries	UV	Oct 11-14
9/11/01	Ten Best of the West, % Lou Lanser, 3870 W. 21 <sup>st</sup> Ave, Vancouver B.C. Canada V6S 1H4	Note 2	Open	HJMNO PQ	15 min	\$10 for two entries	VW	Oct 11-14
N/A Not Announced or not available								
ALL FORMATS ARE NTSC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED								
A Amateur B College Student C Hi Sch or Grade School	D Independent E Com'l F Restricted	G Open	H S 8 J 16mm K Other L 3/4" M VHS	N SVHS O 8mmvid P Hi 8 Q MiniDV	R Regional S exceptions T Cash U Trophies	V Certificates W Other Award X Approximate Y It varies	xx Members yy Non Member zz	

Note 1 Within the USA, entry forms can be obtained from Roger Garretson (see pg 2 for address or e-mail)

Note 2 Open to all residents of states west of the Mississippi River and within Canada, the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba

(Continued from page 5)

them, "for crying out loud, don't look at the camera!" That "hi Mom" syndrome maybe cute on the football telecasts, but it labels your films "bush league."

In summary: DO NOT use still camera techniques for motion pictures. Vary your static scenes with different focal points with some movement if possible. Try different focal length lenses, contrast one color with another. Experiment and create movement where there is none. Catch your people doing something...Don't let your films be merely rapidly changing stills.

# APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AMERICAN MOTION PICTURE SOCIETY

I Would like to Join the Society:

Dues USA: (includes - Movie Maker) \$ 10.00  
Dues Canada: (includes - Movie Maker) \$ 12.00  
Dues-Foreign: (includes - Movie Maker) \$13.00

Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

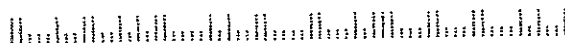
Mail to: AMPS, 30 Kanan Rd., Oak Park, CA 91377-1105

Copies of the AMPS and Ten Best of the West contest entry forms are available on the web  
[www.angelfire.com/movies/amps](http://www.angelfire.com/movies/amps)

From:  
American Motion Picture Society  
30 Kanan Road  
Oak Park, California  
91377-1105



Dr. Matt Jenkins-Comm. Dept 06/01/01  
2800 W. Gore Cameron University  
Lawton OK 73515





FINAL DATE  
FOR ENTRY  
August 31, 2001

# American Motion Picture Society

The

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL

presents



72nd Consecutive Year

A separate form is required for each entry. Please print

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State/Prov \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Title of your production \_\_\_\_\_

Running time \_\_\_\_\_ Amateur \_\_\_\_\_ Independent \_\_\_\_\_

Type: Documentary \_\_\_\_\_ Nature \_\_\_\_\_ Scenario \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL VIDEO MUST BE IN NTSC ONLY**

VIDEO VHS \_\_\_\_\_ SVHS \_\_\_\_\_ Hi8 \_\_\_\_\_ MiniDV \_\_\_\_\_

FILM 8mm \_\_\_\_\_ S-8 \_\_\_\_\_ 16mm \_\_\_\_\_

SOUND Optical \_\_\_\_\_ Magnetic \_\_\_\_\_ Tape \_\_\_\_\_

Return the judges comments? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## ENTRY FEE PER ENTRY

FIRST TAPE \$10.00

ADD'L TAPE(S) 8.00

RETURN POSTAGE \_\_\_\_\_

INSURANCE \_\_\_\_\_

Membership (USA) \$10.00 \*

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment must be made in U.S. funds. Checks, bank drafts, or money orders must be cashable at U.S. banks.

Make payable to:

American Motion Picture Society

The optional AMPS membership includes the "Movie Makers", a bimonthly newsletter

Entries without return postage will be placed in the AMPS library.

Special instructions \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the Festival Rules and Regulations on the back of this form and I agree to abide by them. I hereby affirm that all information I am submitting is true and correct. I understand that I am to pay return postage charges if I wish my tape or film returned and I have enclosed sufficient funds for that purpose.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

From Matt Jenkins  
16 NW Havenshire Circle  
Lawton, OK 73505

To \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_\_

To Matt Jenkins  
16 NW Havenshire Circle  
Lawton OK 73505

Mailing Labels

## DEFINITION OF CLASSIFICATION

**AMATEUR** -is composed of productions made solely for fun and pleasure with no profit motive in mind, have not been financed nor funded by an outside source, and have not been subject of any sales or rental agreement prior to entry in the Festival and have not been made as a part of a college course leading to a degree. No one working on any aspect of the production may receive pay for their services. Entries may be made by more than one person, such as a club, providing the non profit condition remains.

**INDEPENDENT**- is composed of productions that comply with Amateur, except have been financed or funded by an outside source and/or have been produced as a part of a college course leading to a degree.

## ENTRY RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. The Festival is open to all motion picture makers through out the world. Previous entries may not be reentered.
2. Entries may be film or video tape. See the reverse side for formats allowed. All video entries must be in NTSC.
3. Entries may be on any subject.
4. Entries may be up to 30 minutes in length, including credits.
5. Trailers indicating previous awards must be removed.
6. Copyright clearances, when necessary, must accompany the entries.
7. Only one entry on a video cassette is allowed.
8. Entries which the Festival Committee considers risqué or pornographic in nature will be judged but will not be screened at the Festival.
9. Use a separate entry form for each entry. This form may be photo-copied or duplicated by any process.
10. This form must be enclosed with the contest entry.

## ENTRY INFORMATION

1. Receipt of all entries will be acknowledged promptly.
2. While extreme care will be given to all entries, neither the Festival nor its sponsors can be responsible for damage or loss.
3. A list of the winning entries and their makers will be sent to each contestant.
4. The judges sheets will be sent upon request and enclosed with the return of your film/video when so indicated on the reverse side of this form.
5. Entries will be judged prior to and on the closing date for each class of entry. Entries not held for screening at the Festival will be returned promptly

and the winning entries returned as soon as the Festival screening has ended.

Entries must be shipped postpaid with return postage enclosed. If return postage is not enclosed, the entry will be added to the Society's library.

Submission of an entry denotes acceptance of all Festival Rules and Regulations.

Unless the maker objects, this Festival may make duplicate copies of certain winning movies at it's own expense for non profit showing to amateur groups but the copyright remains the property of the movie maker.

## FOREIGN ENTRY SHIPMENTS

1. Entries should be sent by air parcel post.
2. Ask your local post office what information they require from you for mailing your entry to our Festival. Foreign regulations vary within each country.
3. You might also ask your post office of any special requirements for return of your entry.

## THE FINAL DATE FOR ENTRIES IS AUGUST 31, 2001

*All entries must be received by that date!*

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

Plaques for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners.

Certificates for the remaining Top Ten Entries

## SPONSORED AWARDS (Amateur only)

## CATEGORY SPONSOR

Best Editing	Erma and Jack Ruddell
Best Story Picture	Skip and Irene Haag
Most Creative Entry	Rose Dabbs

## OTHER AWARDS FOR.....

Best Cinematography	Best Experimental
Best Club Production	Best Foreign Entry
Best Documentary	Best Nature Entry

# TETON MAGIC REGISTRATION FORM

**SAVAC \* AMPS \* TBW \* 2001 CONVENTION**  
**October 11-14, 2001 at Snow King Resort in Jackson Hole WY**

Name(s) as you wish them to appear on name badges: *Please Print Clearly*

Address

Telephone

E-mail

Local Club Affiliation (if any)

Fee includes attendance at all film/video, speaker, awards programs and socials

Convention Events	Fee (per person)	No. of Persons	Amount
Postmarked BEFORE September 5	US\$35.00	_____	_____

Postmarked AFTER September 5	US \$40.00	_____	_____
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\*Awards Banquet includes selected entree, vegetable, dessert, coffee, tea (gratuity & taxes)

Idaho Stuffed Trout	US \$35.00	_____	_____
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Prime Rib	US \$35.00	_____	_____
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Total Amount enclosed in US Dollars or equivalent US \$\_\_\_\_\_

\*Strict vegetarians contact Jean Frances for veggie substitute—*Do not call Snow King*

Make Checks Payable to UAVM and MAIL to:

**Michael Treshow**

**Phone (801-582-0803)**

**3124 Emigration Canyon**

**e-mail: nannajean@aol.com**

**Salt Lake City, UT 84108**

Thursday Night Social Hour—suite number will be in packet

Friday afternoon—Coffee, Tea and Cookie Break & Saturday night: Awards Banquet

**For SAVAC convention rate of \$89 plus tax (available 3 nights prior/after convention)**

**Make hotel reservation by 10 September—1-800-522-king (5464)**

++Be sure to let reservation desk know you are a SAVAC Convention attendee.++

A Snow King Resort courtesy bus picks up and drops off airport arrivals. Resort is located at 400 East Snow King Avenue. Drivers: Go to center of town, turn right onto Cache St., go to end of road and turn left on Snow King Drive—road dead ends at Snow King Resort.